

Topic: Laboratory Dos and Don'ts

Sometimes a list of dos and don'ts can be a helpful reminder to students of laboratory safety issues.

Do:

- Become familiar with the experiment before coming to the laboratory.
- Follow all laboratory instructions carefully.
- Know all emergency and fire procedures.
- Ask for clarification on any laboratory procedures that are not understood.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles during exercises where glassware, heat, or chemicals are used. Glassware can always fall and shatter sending glass shards into eyes.
- Wear laboratory aprons or coats when instructed to do so.
- Wear protective gloves when instructed to do so.
- Assume all chemicals are toxic and corrosive and act accordingly.
- Read the labels on reagent containers for safety precautions and understand the hazards for all chemicals being used. Have Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) available for all chemicals.
- Stopper or cap all reagent bottles when not in use.
- Keep your work area neat, clean, organized, and clear of clutter.
- Know the location of emergency equipment (first aid kit, eyewash, fire extinguisher, fire blanket, spill containers, emergency exits, and nearest telephone).
- Exercise great caution whenever using heat.
- Keep hair and loose clothing restricted and well away from flames.
- Turn off the gas source when a Bunsen burner is not in use.
- Use proper ventilation and hoods when instructed to do so.
- Handle hot glassware with appropriate clamps or tongs.
- Use extra caution when working with scalpels, knives, glass tubing or other sharp objects.
- Ask for instructor assistance in cleaning up broken glass or chemical spills.
- Discard needles, razor blades, scalpel blades, and other sharp items in a "sharps container."
- Discard cracked or broken glass in a "broken glass container."
- Report all accidents to your instructor immediately.
- Report to your instructor any condition that seems unsafe.
- Keep all laboratory exits clear of debris.
- Put away all items no longer in use.
- Use special care when carrying heavy and expensive equipment such as microscopes.

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(continued)

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- Seek first aid assistance for all cuts or other minor injuries.
- Always add acid slowly to water. Never add water to acid.
- Notify your instructor of any symptoms of illness or allergic reactions during laboratory work.
- Place culture materials in biohazard bags as directed by your instructor.
- Clean your lab table and return all cleaned equipment to its proper place.
- Turn off all gas nozzles and water faucets when leaving the laboratory.
- Clean your work area and wash hands before leaving the laboratory.

Do NOT:

- Begin laboratory work until instructed to do so.
- Do anything in the laboratory that is not understood or that you feel is dangerous.
- Engage in any horseplay in the laboratory.
- Perform unauthorized experiments.
- Operate any equipment until you have been instructed in its proper use.
- Work in isolation—a second person should always be nearby. An instructor must always be present during lab.
- Remove any materials from the laboratory unless instructed to do so.
- Touch your face when working with chemicals or biological cultures.
- Let potential hazards make you afraid to participate in laboratory activities.
- Leave a Bunsen burner or other flame source unattended.
- Light a flame source near flammable materials.
- Move a lit Bunsen burner.
- Taste or ingest any chemicals or plant material.
- Handle or consume food or drink in the laboratory.
- Pipet anything by mouth.
- Put chemicals in a sink or in the trash unless instructed to do so.
- Pour chemicals back into dispensing containers.
- Leave a test tube stopper in place when heating test tubes.
- Drink from laboratory glassware.

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Safety Notes**

Workshop Presenter Notes

Volume 6–8: Laboratory Dos and Don'ts

Now that we are almost three-quarters through the school year, it would be a good time to review key safety rules with your students. A list of dos and don'ts can be a helpful reminder to students of laboratory safety issues.

The safety meeting should take 6–8 minutes to present. The discussion period will vary depending on the issues that need to be addressed.

It is important to keep a copy of these safety meeting notes and a signed attendance sheet to verify that regular safety training meetings were held. The sign-up sheet is almost as important as the meeting notes and is usually the first thing that is reviewed by regulatory inspectors. A copy of the sign-up sheet we suggest using can be found at www.flinnsci.com/Sections/Safety/SNotes/signup.pdf.

Materials (one per staff member)

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Sign-up sheet (one for the group)

Additional Questions for Discussion

1. Should we have a safety test or quiz on these safety dos and don'ts?
2. Which of these dos and don'ts do we observe in our school?
3. Is everyone continually reminding students about the safety rules we covered at the very start of school?
4. Safety contracts: Should we start to use the Flinn student safety contract? (A copy of this contract can be found at www.flinnsci.com/Sections/Safety/safety_contracts.asp.)

We Welcome Your Comments

Please e-mail Flinn Scientific at flinn@flinnsci.com with your comments and feedback on the Flinn Scientific Department Meeting Safety Notes. Were they easy to use? How can we make them better? What other topics would you like covered? Your input is very valuable to us.